

Congress of Micronesia

CAPITOL HILL

SAIPAN

MARIANA ISLANDS

96950

PHONE 9402/9743

TELEX 774 5267

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE COMM. NO. 6-260
(Senate)

July 26, 1976

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Honorable Tosiwo Nakayama
President of the Senate
Congress of Micronesia
Kolonia, Ponape
Eastern Caroline Islands 96941

and

The Honorable Bethwel Henry
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Congress of Micronesia
Kolonia, Ponape
Eastern Caroline Islands 96941

Gentlemen:

The purpose of this letter is to inform the members of the Congress of Micronesia regarding recent developments on the work of the Special Joint Committee Concerning Rongelap and Utirik Atolls.

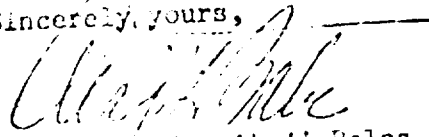
The attached document summarizes the background and current status of legislation drafted to provide additional compensation for the affected Marshallese. What is presented is an excerpt from U.S. Ambassador Sherer's remarks addressed to the 43rd Session of the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

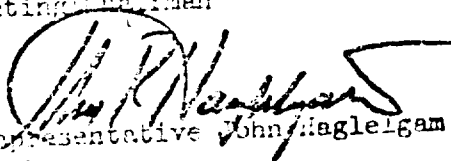
While we are somewhat concerned that it has taken over one year for the legislation to be drawn up,

The Honorable Tom L. Donohue
The Honorable Bethwell Henry
July 26, 1976
Page 2

approved, and transmitted to OMB, we have every confidence that time will permit authorization hearings to be held prior to the end of the 94th U.S. Congress.

Sincerely, yours,


Representative Ataji Balos
Acting Chairman


Representative John Hagler
Member

Attachment

(Mr. Sherer, United States)

In August 1964 the United States Congress appropriated the sum of \$950,000 which, after legal expenses, was paid to the affected inhabitants of Rongelap Atoll. Each of the 82 exposed individuals or his heirs received approximately \$10,000 as a lump sum. The 157 people of Utirik, who had received a lesser degree of exposure, were not compensated.

Since the 1964 payment, thyroid abnormalities have been appearing in the exposed Rongelapese and 25 operations for thyroid removal have taken place. Leukemia also appeared in a 19-year-old boy who had been exposed as a one-year-old infant. This young man died in 1974 in the National Cancer Institute, Clinical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, while being treated for acute myelogenous leukemia. Twenty-nine of the original exposed Rongelap population of 84 have developed thyroid abnormalities.

Additionally, in the past two years six cases of thyroid abnormalities have appeared in the Utirik exposed group.

In 1972 the Congress of Micronesia created a Special Joint Committee Concerning Rongelap and Utirik Atoll. In May 1975 the Chairman of the Special Joint Committee and one of the Committee members met in Washington, D.C., with United States Senators and Congressmen about a request for additional compensation to the exposed persons or their survivors. This included an "inconvenience payment" of \$1,000 each to 157 people of Utirik or their survivors, payments to the mother and father of the Marshallese boy who died of acute leukemia in 1974 and payment of \$25,000 each per person per thyroid operation, past and future.

A proposed bill for additional compensation was prepared by the Department of the Interior and has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for clearance and transmittal to the United States Congress.

Preliminary conferences with Congressional members on the part of Interior officials and Congress of Micronesia members have indicated that the appropriate United States Congress Committees will give a sympathetic hearing to this proposal.